

# Launch time for sell-out Fringe comedy show



By Libby Key

WATCH out Tim Peake, women are penetrating the science world and this time we're all knowing about it.

This is thanks to Samantha Baines, actress and comedian, whose science comedy, '1 Woman, a Dwarf Planet and 2 Cox' will be showing at Battersea's Theatre 503 on Monday.

The show was a sell-out at Edinburgh Fringe 2016, as was its 2017 sequel '1 woman, a High-Flyer and a Flat Bottom'.

So how does a theatre-trained actress end up in the realms of black holes and planets?

Samantha says it was BBC presenter and physics professor Brian Cox that got her into it.

"That and the fact he's obviously quite dishy, I mean, he's got very good hair," she said.

"I started doing the show to impress Brian Cox, in the hope that we would have some sort of sexually charged coffee and I'd tell him all these facts and he'd be really impressed.

"I am married, so it would just be an innocent sexually charged coffee.

"However, during the show I discovered loads of amazing women in science, and that made me think maybe I should try and impress them instead of Brian."

These women include Sally Ride, the first American woman in space (1938) and Helen Sharman the first British astronaut in space (1991) who Sam met at the Science Museum.

Sam's science stand-up fits in snugly with Theatre 503's program this season, which includes Andrew Thompson's 'In Event of Moon Disaster', a play that looks at women's role in the workplace since 1969 and what happened when Apollo 11 first landed on the moon.

Lisa Spirling, artistic director of Theatre 503 is impressed by the topics Sam covers.

"We'd seen her work and I think she's very inspiring and

very funny," she said.

"She reflects on the role of women in the space race and the lack of attention they got, she looks at her own issues with sexism as a comedian and her relationship with her grandmother.

"There's lots in there which had a tie in with what we're programming this season and everything she was doing tied in beautifully to our overarching aim to be a launchpad for new writers."

Theatre 503's quest to nurture new writer's talent is what has led to 169 new writers having their work performed on their stage in the past 18 months, with three West End Transfers, an Olivier Award and two national tours.

This will be Sam's debut performance at Theatre 503 and she values its importance as a community hub.

"It's a really lovely space so I'm really looking forward to performing there.

"I think it's great when the community gets involved with its theatre space," she added.

On the subject of firsts, Samantha was also the first woman to ever be a finalist in the 2017 UK Pun Championships, which has headlined at the Leicester Comedy Festival for the past few years.

"It's kind of ridiculous for 2017 that I am the only women to ever be in the pun championship final," she said.

"So that's why I am trying to bring puns to the masses and get people used to a lady delivering puns."

Chief executive of the Leicester Comedy Festival, Geoff Rowe explained: "There are many more men that enter than women.

"I don't know why that is, but it's great that she entered and got through to the final at the end of the night!"

'1 Woman, a Dwarf Planet and 2 Cox' will be no exception to Sam's love of puns and will feature a pun bell that is given to an audience member that they have

HOPING TO BAG A COX: Samantha Baines is bringing her show '1 Woman, a Dwarf Planet and 2 Cox', inspired by Brian Cox to, Theatre 503 (top right)